4-1943

Alabama

Southern White Man Indicted By Jury on Charge of Peonage

Washington Tribune
Washington, D. C.

Attorney General Francis Biddle today had announced that a Federal Grand Jury at Mobile, Alabama, has returned an indictment charging O'Neal Bodiford and Ralph McGaugh of Fort Deposit, Alabama, with violations of the civil rights, slavery and peonage statutes in the holding of Luther Carter, Negro farm hand, in involuntary servitude.

The indictment states that Carter left Bodiford's farm to work for a sawmill operator at Bay Minette, Alabama. On April 13, it is alleged, the defendants went to the sawmill where they beat Carter and forced him into their automobile with the intention of returning him to Bodiford's farm to work out an alleged debt. They were arrested by State Police enroute.

The three counts of the indictment charge, respectively, (1) a conspiracy to deprive Carter of his civil rights in violation of Section 51, Title 18, U. S. Code; (2) kidnaping a person to be held as a slave in violation of Section 443, Title 18, U. S. Code; and (3) the holding of a person in peonage in violation of Section 444, Title 18, U. S. Code. Maximum penalties prescribed are a fine of $5,000 and imprisonment for ten years, or both, under the first count, and a fine of $5,000 and imprisonment for five years, or both, under each of the two remaining counts.

The indictment followed investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of a complaint filed by Carter's employer at the sawmill. The case was presented to the Grand Jury by Albert J. Tulley, U. S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama.

McGough, white, were given three-year suspended sentences, fined $500 each and put on probation recently in U.S. District Court at Mobile, Ala.

Atty.-Gen. Francis Biddle announced the decision and some details of the cases last week.

Bodiford and McGough were first arrested by Alabama State police while returning from Fort Minetta, Ala., to Bodiford's farm, carrying Luther Carter, who had left Bodiford's farm to work in a sawmill, in their auto.

Kidnaped from Sawmill

The two went to the mill, seized and beat Carter and carried him off by force in their car. The case was reported to the civil rights section of the Department of Justice by the sawmill operator from whose property Carter had been kidnaped.

Tom C. Clark, head of the criminal division of the Justice Department, supervised investigation of the case and Albert J. Tully, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Alabama, handled the prosecution.

This is the third such conviction obtained by the department this year in the South. The first was in Texas and the second in Mississippi. In all three cases, successful prosecution has been due largely to co-operation and interest of local officials and citizens, the announcement said.

INDICTED FOR PEONAGE

Guardian
Boston, Mass

MOBILE, ALA.—A Federal Grand Jury has returned an indictment charging O'Neal Bodiford and Ralph McGaugh, of Fort Deposit, Ala., with violations of the civil rights, slavery and peonage statues in the holding of Luther Carter, colored farm hand, in voluntary servitude.

The indictment states that Carter left Bodiford's farm to work for a sawmill operator at Bay Minette, Ala. On April 13, 1943, it is alleged the defendants went to the sawmill where they beat Carter and forced him into their automobile with the intention of returning him to Bodiford's farm to work out an alleged debt. They were arrested by State Police en route.

The three counts of the indictment charge (1) a conspiracy to deprive Carter of his civil rights in violation of Section 51, Title 18, U. S. Code; (2) kidnapping a person to be held as a slave in violation of Section 443, Title 18, U. S. Code; and (3) the holding a person in peonage in violation of Section 444, Title 18, U. S. Code. Maximum penalties are a fine of $5,000 and imprisonment for ten years, or both, under the first count, and a fine of $5,000 and imprisonment for five years, or both, under each of the two remaining counts.

The indictment followed investigation by the FBI of a complaint filed by Carter's employer at the sawmill.

Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

Convict 2 Whites for Peonage

WASHINGTON (ANP) — Convicted of violating Federal civil rights, slavery and peonage statutes, Olean Bodiford and Ralph

Slavery Conditions in South Cited in U. S. Peonage Case

PM's Bureau

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20.—A new hint of the peonage conditions under which some Southern Negroes live was provided by a Grand Jury indictment of two white men in Mobile, Ala., yesterday on slavery charges.

O'Neal Bodiford and Ralph McGaugh of Fort Deposit, Ala., were charged by the Southern Grand Jury with violations of the civil rights, slavery and peonage statutes for kidnaping and holding Luther Carter, a Negro farm hand, in involuntary servitude.

This is only one of a dozen peonage cases under investigation by the Justice Dept. Civil Liberities Unit, or awaiting trial. But Victor Rotnem, head of the Unit, said that the cases showed the South was in revolt against such conditions.

State Complaints

He pointed out that the current case resulted from complaints filed by State officials with the Justice Dept., indicating that the "better elements" in the community would not tolerate such treatment of Negroes.

Carter, the alleged victim in the latest case, was a married Negro and left in March to take a job with a sawmill operator at Bay Minette, Ala. He is said to have left behind him a small debt to McGaugh, a storekeeper, which Bodiford had guaranteed.

The indictment charged that on April 13, Bodiford and McGaugh went to the sawmill in Bay Minette, beat Carter and forced him into their automobile with the intention of taking him back to work out the alleged debt, said to have been less than $50. They were arrested by State police enroute back to their home town, on a complaint filed by the sawmill operator at Bay Minette.

The Charges

The case before the Grand Jury was handled by Albert J. Tulley, U. S. attorney for the Southern District of Alabama. The two men were charged with:

¶ Conspiracy to deprive Carter of his civil rights in violation of law.

¶ Kidnaping a person to be held as a slave in violation of the law.

¶ Holding [illegible] peonage in violation of Federal statutes.

Maximum penalities under such charges are a fine of $5000 and imprisonment for 10 years, or both, on the first count and a fine of $5000 and imprisonment for five years under the other counts.

Alabamans Indicted On Peonage Charges

Call
Kansas City, Mo.

WASHINGTON. — (ANP) — Defying one of the unwritten laws of the South, a Mobile, Ala., Federal grand jury [illegible] indictments last week against two white farmers on charges of peonage, Attorney Gen. Francis Biddle announced.

Named in the legal papers are O'Neal Bodiford and Ralph McGaugh of Fort Deposit, Ala., who are accused of violating civil rights, slavery and peonage statutes in the holding of Luther Carter, a farm hand, in involuntary servitude.

The indictments which followed an investigation by the FBI on complaint of a sawmill operator at Bay Minette charges (1) a conspiracy to deprive Carter of his civil rights; (2) kidnaping a person to be held as a slave; and (3) holding a person in peonage.

Maximum penalties are a fine of $5,000 or imprisonment of 10 years or both under each of the other two counts.

According to the indictment, Carter left Bodiford's farm to work in the sawmill at Bay Minette, where it is alleged, the defendants beat and forced him into their automobile with the intention of taking him as a slave on Bodiford's farm, where it is alleg-

Ask FBI To Investigate Farm Slavery In Arkansas

Daily World

Atlanta, Georgia

U. S. Department of Justice has been asked to investigate peonage conditions in Arkansas it was revealed Saturday by Frank McCallister, Secretary, Southern Workers Defense League.

McCallister said that an investigation completed by him this week disclosed that many planters were promising draft-deferment to their sharecroppers if they would sign a "yellowdog" contract agreeing to stay on the planters' farm for at least five years. In some instances, when Southern Tenant Farmers' Union members refused to sign, they were kicked off the plantation and their crop taken away.

McCallister said that his investigation established that it appeared many planters were getting draft-deferment blanks in quantities from Selective Service Boards and telling sharecroppere and farm laborers that if they would agree to remain where they were for five years they would be kept out of the Army.

Agriculture labor is viturally frozen, stopping the normal flow of labor supply by this practice and by the misapplication of Public Law 45 passed by Congress April 29, 1943, restricting the transfer of agricultural workers from one county to another.

War Food Administration has predicted loss of millions of dollars of food and feed crops unless the situation is cleared up.

Union members refused to sign, they were kicked off the plantation and their crop taken away.

McCallister said that his investigation established that it appeared many planters were getting draft-deferment blanks in quantities from Selective Service Boards and telling sharecroppers and farm laborers that if they would agree to remain where they were five years they would be kept out of the Army.

Agricultural labor is virtually frozen, stopping the normal flow of labor supply by this practice and by the misapplication of Public Law 45 passed by Congress April 29, 1943, restricting the transfer of agricultural workers from one county to another.

War Food Administration has predicted loss of millions of dollars and feed crops unless the situation is cleared up.

SELECTIVE SERVICE USED AS JIM CROW WEAPON

The Workers Defense League today released a letter sent by its its national secretary, Morris Milgrim, to Major General Lewis B. Hershey describing the Jim Crow drafting of Negroes in deferrable jobs while white workers in identical work are deferred. Terming this use of Selective Service as "racist," the letter points out that this discrimination is practiced in many areas of the South and has been common in Augusta and Macon, according to information given the WDL by B. F. McLaurin, International Representative, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

The letter, in full, follows:

"Mr B. F. McLaurin, International Representative, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, has called our attention to what seems to be a clear violation of Selective Service procedure in regard to occupational defernet. He has information that in many areas of the South, Negro locomotive firemne and train porters, whose occupations have been declared deferable, have been drafted while white locomotive firemen have been exempted.

"This is a flagrant example of discrimination that is particularly dangerous in view of present tensions in race relations resulting from just such injustices against Negroes in all aspects of the war effort. Two cities in which this procedure has been common are Augusta and Macon, Georgia.

"May we point out that we are informed by Mr. McLaurin that the Southeastern Railroads the hiring relatively large numbers of white firemen—more than are needed for their present needs—and hoarding this potential reservoir of manpower while they await the drafting of and eventual complete elimination of Negro firemen. Can you think of anything more calculated to arouse the resentment of the Negro workers of the country than this racist use of Selective Service?

Nation New York, N. Y.

FRANK McALLISTER, secretary of the Southern Workers Defense League, reports after a trip to Arkansas that planters in that state are promising their share-croppers draft deferment if they sign contracts agreeing to stay where they are for at least five years. The planters get draft-deferment blanks in quantity from Selective Service Boards for this purpose. Share-croppers who refuse to sign contracts are evicted.

Defense League Asks Probe By Justice Dep't

Daily World

Atlanta, Georgia

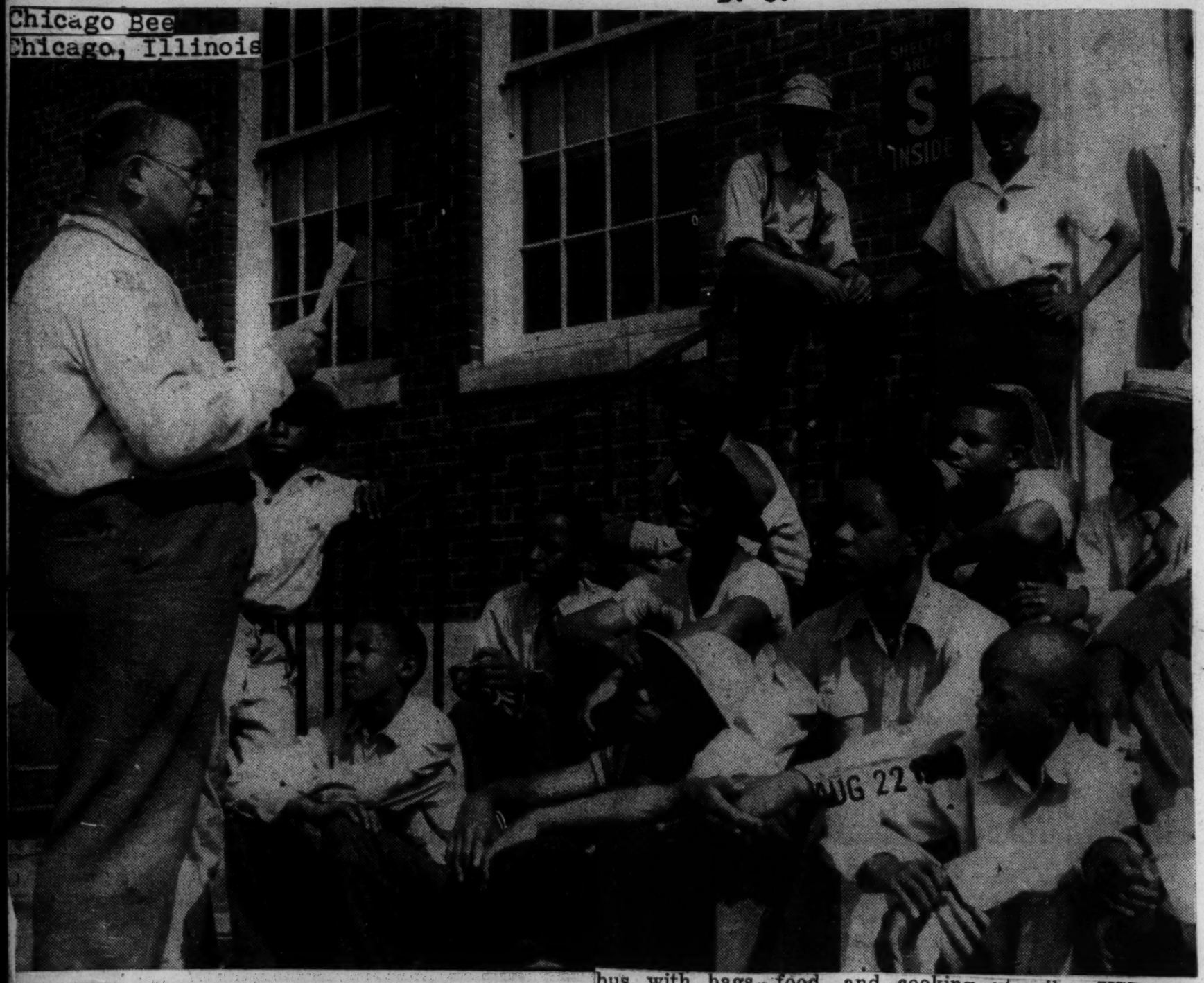
U. S. Department of Justice has been asked to investigate peonage conditions in Arkansas it was revealed by Frank McCallister, Secretary, Southern Workers Defense League.

McCallister said that an investigation completed by him this week disclosed that many planters were promising draft-deferment to their sharecroppers if they would sign a "yellow-dog" contract agreeing to stay in the planters' farm for at least five years. In some instances

4-1943

D. C.

Chicago Bee
Chicago, Illinois



VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS TO HELP SAVE VITAL WAR CROP—Twenty-six Washington, D. C., high school boys enlisted in the Victory Farm Volunteers last week and left by bus Sunday morning for Cambridge, Md., to help save a 15,000-acre tomato crop. Extension Service officials estimate that the 26 boys will harvest 12 tons of tomatoes daily. The U. S. Department of Agriculture reports that 150,000 youths have joined the VFV to help relieve the farm labor shortage. At extreme left, Roscoe G. Robinson, teacher at Phelps Vocational School, who will supervise the camp where the boys will be housed, is shown giving the youths last minute instructions before they board the bus; second from left, the Porter twins, Chester and Alfred, check up to see that the breakfast cereal is there; third from left, the youngsters load the food into the bus; at extreme right, the Victory Farm Volunteers lineup to board the bus with bags, food, and cooking utensils.—USDA Photos by Ackerman.

AUG 22

Escaped "Slavery" Farm

Daily World. Atlanta, Ga. FEB 11 1943

MIAMI, Fla.—(SNS)—These youngsters, formerly of Jackson, Tennessee, arrived here recently after escaping from a sugar plantation at Clewiston, Florida, where they said they were held in semi-slavery. They are, left to right, Rufus Franklin, 17; John H. Bradford, 28; Jerry Bond, 16, and Thomas Edison Atkins, 28.

Four Youths Escape From Plantation Semi-Slavery

Daily World Atlanta, Ga. FEB 11 1943

MIAMI, Fla.—(S N S)—Four former Jackson, Tennessee youths who claimed they lived in semi-slavery nearly 18 months on a Sugar plantation at Clewiston, Florida, are now touring Miami churches and civic organizations telling of conditions they were forced to endure while working in the cane fields.

The youths, who said they escaped from the plantation, are Jerry Bond, 16, Rufus Franklin, 17, John H. Bradford, 28, and Thomas Edison Atkins, 28.

Say They Were Lured To Work On Florida Farm

The boys said they were working in Jackson, Tennessee when they were lured to the plantation. Bradford said he was doing Defense work; Franklin declared he was working on his father's farm; Bond said he was employed at a drug store, and Atkins said he was working at a compress.

The boys were eager to tell of their experiences after arriving here. They said they were paid what their "bosses" thought they were worth, which in most instances amounted to 30 and 40 cents a day, and that they were lured from their homes under the pretense that they would be paid 50 cents an hour for chopping cane.

Many citizens of Miami are aiding the youths. They have been given clothes and food and plans are underway to send them back to Jackson, Tennessee.

The boys are intelligent and not afraid to tell of their expriences at the sugar plantation.

Southern Grand Jury Indicts Sheriff

Tribune Philadelphia, Pa. JUN 12 1943

WASHINGTON, D. C. — A Federal Grand Jury at Tampa, Fla., on June 2, returned an indictment charging Jeff Wiggins, sheriff of Glades County, with working county prisoners on his farm in violation of the Federal Civil Rights statute, the Department of Justice announced this week.

Sheriff Wiggins is said to have removed inmates from the the county jail and forced them to work on his farm in violation of Section 52, Title 18, of the U. S. Code.

Conviction carries with it a maximum penalty of imprisonment for one year or $1,000 fine, or both.

The indictment supersedes a similara one returned against Wiggins last November.

JUN 12 1943

The Attorney General also announced the same Grand Jury had returned a similar indictment against Joseph E. McGlamery, superintendent of the Tampa Stockade.

April 1, 1943

PEONAGE CHARGE IS THROWN OUT

Federal Judge Asserts Jury Box Filled Incorrectly

TAMPA, Fla., April 26—(AP)—Indictments charging the United States Sugar Corporation, four of its superintendents and Glades County Sheriff Jeff Wiggins with peonage and violation of civil liberties statutes were thrown out of court by Federal Judge William J. Barker Monday on the ground that the jury box was filled illegally when the Grand Jury which returned the indictments was drawn.

Defense attorneys contended that the jury box from which the names of grand jurors was drawn contained names only of Hillsborough County (Tampa) citizens, omitting names of residents of the 13 other counties in this district.

Dist. Atty. Herbert Phillips said that only Hillsborough County names were used in filling the box for purposes of expediency and because of wartime transportation difficulties. Judge Barker nevertheless ruled that the indictments were invalid because the jury box was not representative of the entire district.

The charges involved the treatment of Negro laborers brought from Alabama and Tennessee to work on the sugar corporation's plantations in the Everglades, and the defense maintained that the jurymen, not being from an agricultural county, were unfamiliar with farming and farm labor problems.

The defendant superintendents were M. E. Von Mach, Evan Ward McLeod, Neal Williamson and Oliver H. Sheppard.

The indictment against Sheriff Wiggins charged that he took nine prisoners from the Glades County Jail and forced them to work on his farm without pay.

Phillips said that any decision to appeal the case would rest with Washington.

Attorneys for the corporation and its superintendents also argued that the jurors were prejudiced. Counsel asserted that for years a controversy has been carried on between the corporation and Florida's Sen. Claude Pepper, and that the jurors were influenced by this alleged dispute.

Sheriff Wiggins did not use this line of defense, and Judge Barker said that he based his ruling solely on the method of filling the jury box. The indictments were returned Nov. 4, 1942.

U. S. Indicts Dixie Sheriff, Stockade Superintendent

Guardian Boston, Mass.

TAMPA, Fla. — A federal Grand Jury at Tampa, Fla., on June 2, returned an indictment charging Joe Wiggins, sheriff of Glades County, with working county prisoners on his farm in violation of the Federal Civil Rights statute, the Department of Justice announced this week. Sheriff Wiggins is said to have removed inmates from the county jail and forced them to work on his farm in violation of Section 52, Title 18, of the U. S. Code. (Civil rights statute).

A Federal Grand Jury, sitting in the Southern Distrcit of Florida, at Tampa, on June 4, returned an indictment charging Joseph E. McGlamery, superintendent of the Tampa Stockade, with working city prisoners on his own property in violation of one of Federal Civil Rights statutes.

Maximum penalties under this statute are imprisonment for one year or a fine of $1000 or both.

JUN 12 1943

Indict Fla. Sheriff Again for Peonage

A Federal grand jury at Tampa, Fla., last week returned a second indictment charging Jeff Wiggins, sheriff of Glades County, with forcing county prisoners to work on his farm in violation of the Federal Civil Rights statute, the Department of Justice announced this week.

Conviction under the anti-peonage provision carries with it a maximum penalty of imprisonment of one year, a $1,000 fine, or both.

The indictment supersedes a similar one returned against Wiggins last November, and was requested by Assistant Attorney General Wendell Berge of the Washington office.

Prison Superintendent Indicted For Working Prisoners at Home

Federal Civil Rights statutes. The Grand Jury, investigation, was requested by Assistant Attorney General Wendell Berge, in charge of the Federal Civil Rights Division, was that this involuntary servitude in violation of Section 52, of the criminal Title 18, U. S. Code (civil rights statute). Department by Attorney General Francis Biddle announced this week that a Federal Grand Jury, sitting in the Southern District of Florida, working city prisoners on his at Tampa, on June 4, returned own property in violation of one Herbert United States Attorney S. Phillips and Special Assistant Sylvester P. Meyers. Maximum penalties under this are imprisonment for one year or a fine of $1,000, or both.

A Federal Grand Jury at Tampa, Fla., on June 2, returned an indictment charging Jeff Wiggins, sheriff of Glades County, with working county prisoners on his farm in violation of the Federal Civil Rights statute, the Department of Justice announced this week. Sheriff Wiggins is said to have removed inmates from the county jail and forced them to work on his farm in violation of Section 52, Title 18, of the U. S. Code.

Conviction carries with it a maximum penalty of imprisonment for one year or $1,000 fine, or both.

The indictment supersedes a similar one returned against Wig-

JUDGE THROWS OUT PEONAGE INDICTMENT

U. S. Sugar Corporation Lawyers Win First Bout In Case

TAMPA, Fla. — (ANP) — Holding that the jury box from which the names of the grand jury were drawn was filled illegally, Federal Judge William J. Barker Monday nolle prossed indictments charging the United States Sugar corporation, four of its superintendents and Glades County Sheriff Jeff Wiggins with peonage and violation of civil liberties statutes.

Immediately after the indictments were thrown out, Dist. Atty. Herbert Phillips said that they would be redrawn and presented before a new grand jury.

Defense attorneys contended that the jury box from which the names of the grand jurors was drawn contained names only of Hillsborough county (Tampa) citizens, omitting names of residents of the 13 other counties in the district.

Admitting that this was true, prosecutor Phillips said that it was done for purposes of expediency and because of wartime travel difficulties. Judge Barker nevertheless ruled that the indictments were invalid because the jury box was not representative of the entire district.

Forced Labor

The charges involved the treatment of Negro farm laborers brought from Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee to work on the sugar corporation's plantations in the everglades, and the defense maintained that the jurymen, not being from an agricultural county, were unfamiliar with farming and labor problems peculiar to the sugar plantations.

The defendant superintendents were M. E. Von Mach, Evan Ward McLeod, Neal Williamson and Oliver H. Sheppard.

Sheriff Wiggins was charged with having removed nine prisoners from the county jail and forced them to work as slaves on his private farm.

Attorneys for the corporation and its superintendents also argued that the jurors were prejudiced. Counsel asserted that for years a controversy has been carried on between the corporation and Florida's liberal Sen. Claude Pepper, and that the jurors were influenced by this alleged dispute.

Judge Barker in making his ruling contended the "prejudiced argument" did not affect his decision and that he was moved to throw out the indictments solely on the ground of illegal filling of the grand jury box.

The indictments were returned on November 4, 1942. Defence attorneys used by the corporation are the same who on a number of occasions have appeared in defense of indicted Ku Klux Klan officials.

4-1943
The Daily Worker
New York, N. Y.

'Farm Bloc' Wants Slave Labor

FEB 23 1943

By Frank Ryhlick

(Daily Worker Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22.—The "farm bloc" spokesmen for the National Association of Manufacturers revealed today that when they speak of "farm labor" they want the nearest thing to "slave labor" that is possible in a democracy.

Witness after witness before the Senate Agriculture Sub-committee echoed the anti-labor line of the NAM.

It is not necessary here to go into the long list of facts that disclose the link between the NAM and the "farm bloc." They have been well-publicized. It is necessary only to recall that Frank Gannett, a cog in the Hoover-Du-pont machine running the NAM, is credited with having pulled the strings that "unified" the big money "farm" organizations.

The choicest bits in the testimony today must be credited to Representative Pat Cannon of Florida. They reek with the scent of old magnolia and slave quarters.

Cannon declared with all sincerity and solemnity that farm workers imported from the Bahamas would be better than Puerto Rican workers because "they fit socially into the class of people (Negroes) who work our farms."

FEB 23 1943

HIT FSA

"We haven't time," he said, "to wrestle with the social problems of bringing in nationals who are not accepted by one group (whites) and will not themselves accept the the other (Negroes)."

Cannon bolstered his argument by pointing out that Bahamanas could be deported if necessary while it was impossible to get rid of the Puerto Ricans.

The "farm bloc" witnesses centered some of their heaviest fire on the efforts of the Farm Security Administration to maintain conditions of minimum decency for farm workers.

FEB 23 1943

W. R. Ogg, secretary of the American Farm Bureau Federation, voiced the hope that the new rationing of canned goods would awaken the country to the fact that "social reforms, regulations on hours and wages, housing and menus for farm workers are interfering with the ability of farmers to produce food."

Ogg, whose organization represents the commercial type of farm controlled by the banks and insurance companies, also referred sarcastically to what he termed the administration's efforts to get "bargain prices for consumers."

Ogg volunteered the information that "we'll have inflation as long as the wages of industrial labor are uncontrolled." Apparently he has never heard of the War Labor Board or the Little Steel formula.

L. L. Chandler, representing big fruit and vegetable growers in nine Florida counties, entertained the sympathetic and intrigued subcommittee with what he described as "orgies" of drinking and gay times had by laborers supplied to growers by the Farm Security Agency.

FEB 23 1943

Chandler unwinkingly declared that these workers "petted, pampered and spoiled" under FSA policies "dripping with social reform."

"FARM FACTORIES"

The implication of all testimony was that the FSA, with its programs to help small farmers and farm workers, be liquidated, and that the big "farm factories" be allowed to solve their problems through unrestricted profits and exploitation. The hand-picked witnesses urged that the parity formula be revised to include farm labor costs, but at the same time they proposed measures to make certain that very little of the "costs" went to farm labor.

FEB 23 1943

Representative Stephen Pace, who proudly announces that he hails from Americus, Georgia (where about 16 per cent of the people vote), appeared before the House Rules Committee to ask approval of his bill to include farm labor in calculating parity. Of this bill, Farm Research has said:

"The Pace bill seems to have been written around cotton, in which Ed. O'Neal, Farm Bureau President, is chiefly interested. Cotton Ed Smith and Senator Thomas profess to believe that juggling parity will serve to increase production; they prefer not to mention the fact that they are primarily concerned with pushing up the price of short staple cotton and that a war plan for agriculture would promote a shift from short staple cotton to more essential crops."

GENERAL
FEB 23 1943

PACE HEARINGS CONTINUED

The Pace bill, however, would do far more than swell the profits of the big cotton planters. It would apply to other crops as well, and would raise the cost of living at least 10 per cent. Hearings on the measure will continue tomorrow.

The "farm bloc," as indicated by the Farm Research quotation, does not want a war plan for agriculture any more than the NAM wants a planned economy for war industry. Both are helping to throttle the Pepper-Tolan-Kilgore bill to provide a central administrative agency for our entire war economy.

...left. Their behavior was all that could be desired and they were loved dearly by the children, to whom they were more than generous."

Another officer wrote: "As a resident of 30 years of this community, I feel sure you will be interested in knowing how sorry we and the neighbors were when the Negroes here now."

...plus of farm workers in his county to other areas, and pledged to raise a volunteer force of 10,000 experienced farm workers in the South. But Col. Jay L. Taylor, deputy food administrator, told Mitchell of the union, that he held no hope for the use of the unemployed Southerners. Several attempts were made to get the President to veto the bill, known as H. J. Res. 96.

The CIO pointed out that the bill will waste government money on a program to freeze chaotic conditions of shortages in some areas, surpluses in others, by giving authority to extension agents in 3000 counties to prevent movement of agricultural

Mitchell said: We know there cotton plantations [illegible] four to six months a year on the [illegible] though they are employed only [illegible]

Pursuit Of Democracy

Pittsburgh Courier
5 Pittsburgh Pa.
MAY 15 1943

BY MARJORIE McKENZIE

LAST week a quiet but dangerous bombshell exploded on the President's desk when over the protest of prominent leaders, he affixed his signature to joint resolution H. J. Res. 96. This is a conference report of the two Houses which makes an appropriation of $26,100,000 to assist in providing a supply and distribution of farm labor for the remainder of 1943. This sum is to be expended by the Administrator of Food Production and Distribution and, among other things, provides for payments to the states under the supervision of the agricultural extension services of the land grant colleges of the states, for such purposes as the recruiting training and placement of workers (including tenant farmers and sharecroppers) and transportation, medical and burial services and shelter for these workers.

Miss McKenzie

LIMITS MOBILITY OF FARM WORKERS

Also, among other things, the conference report establishes the following limitation:

"No part of the funds herein appropriated shall be expended for the transportation of any worker from the county where he resides or is working to a place of employment outside of such county without the prior consent in writing of the county extension agent of such county, if such worker has resided in such county for a period of one year or more immediately prior thereto and has been engaged in agricultural labor as his principal occupation during such period."

MAY 15 1943

No appeal may be taken to Food Administrator Chester Davis from the action of the county agent.

IT WILL be remembered that approximately 65 per cent of all Negro workers are limited to agricultural and domestic occupations and that 77 per cent of the Negro population lives in the South, where cheap Negro labor holds an institutional position in the agricultural economy.

MAY 15 1943

AGENTS CONTROLLED BY REACTIONARIES

The beneficial effects of H. J. Res. 96 relating to training, health services, shelter and recruitment out of areas of unemployment or underemployment into areas busy with food production for the war effort, may never be realized in the case of Negro workers whose release depends upon the whim of a county agent. Anyone familiar with the psychology of the South and the pattern of lynchings know that the smaller the geographical and political unit, the greater the tension and emotion in racial and other competitive matters.

A COUNTY agent in the deep South is likely to be a petty politician demagogue more interested in political power and in sustaining it by persecuting Negro workers than in contributing to the war effort. These agents are politically responsible to the American Farm Bureau Federation, which represents wealth farmers to whom the migration of farm labor means scarcity of supply and higher wages. Although in the Middle West, the county extension agents, who are government employees paid jointly out of state and federal funds, may be ordinary officials, in the South they represent real control and are tied in politically with the farm bloc.

MAY 15 1943

KEEP NEGROES IMMOBILIZED

The suggestion that the worker is free to move on his own resources and at will in and out of the county or state under constitutional guarantees is empty of meaning when consideration is given to the inexperience, illiteracy, fear and poverty of Negro laborers in the rural South. The initiative and sophistication required to act upon posted notices of employment in distant counties or states, if indeed any such notices were to be posted, are lacking among many people who have a real contribution to make.

MAY 15 1943

THE CONSENT requirement is an obvious technique of resistance to federal interference with local affairs. It is reminiscent of the emigrant agency laws which exist in ten of the southern states. The purpose of these laws, which exact prohibitive taxes of several thousand dollars for the privilege of soliciting workers for employment outside the state, is to prevent depletion of the Negro labor force. In periods of accelerated outmigration such as the present crisis, these laws are strictly invoked, thus immobilizing the Negro worker and keeping him forever a victim of underemployment in an overpopulated area.

MAY 15 1943

SOUTH OPPOSES FEDERAL AGENCIES

The constitutionality of the emigrant laws has not been determined by the Supreme Court of the United States, but a related question was discussed in Edwards vs. California (314 U. S. 160.) This is the famous "Okie" case in which the privileges and immunities of national citizenship are given broad interpretation and the clear

MOBILITY OF FARM WORKERS RESTRICTED UNDER LEGISLATION

...secure the repeal of the provisions of the law which make it a virtual return to slavery for thousands of ...

...signed the farm ... bill which forbids ... farm workers, particularly in the ... consent of the ... prohibits the fed... retary of the Farmers Union.

...setting any mini... The Farmers Union submitted to ...using, or working ... Chester Davis, food administrator, ...ese workers. ... a list of 2,200 farm workers avail... Tenant Farmers ...able for immediate transportation ...ning a campaign to ...

(Defender Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON — President Roosevelt has signed the "slave-labor" bill which forbids agricultural workers to leave their county without consent of their county agent and provides federal government settings up minimum wage, maximum hours standards for these workers. The Southern Tenant Farmers Union is planning a campaign to

Chicago Defender
MAY 8 - 1943

FDR Signs Farm Slave Legislation

Imported Workers Profit By Plight

Federal Law Restricts Farm Workers To Virtual Peonage

MAY 15 1943

MEMPHIS, Tenn., May 13—The Southern Tenant Farmers' union plans a campaign to secure the repeal of provisions in a law just adopted by Congress which prohibits the Federal government from transporting farm workers out of a county without each worker having the written consent of the County Agricultural Agent.

This announcement was made by H. L. Mitchell, general secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, following a conference here in Memphis of Agricultural Extension Agents from 11 southern states. The Extension Agents discussed plans for importing into the United States 50,000 Mexican, 10,000 Jamacian, and 5,000 Bahaman farm workers as well as the organization of a land army to be composed of 3,500,000 women and children from the cities.

VIRTUAL PEONAGE UNDER NEW LAW

Mitchell said, "There are hundreds of thousands of sharecroppers and farm laborers in the cotton south who are employed only 4 to 6 months a year when the federal government will be forbidden to transfer to other areas for seasonal employment under the terms of H.J. Res. 96 appropriating 26 million dollars for supplying labor needs on the nations farms. The County Agents have the right under the law to refuse to permit the U. S. Government to transport any of these workers out of their home county.

"We know that there isn't a county agent in the South who will admit that there is a surplus of farm workers in his county. This law with gas and tire rationing now in effect in our opinion constitutes virtual peonage and is a violation of the 13th amendment of the Constitution of the United States which abolished slavery."

UNABLE TO USE DOMESTIC LABOR

It was also revealed that the Southern Tenant Farmers' union had submitted to Chester Davis, Food Administrator, a list of 2200 farm workers available for immediate transportation to other areas and had pledged to raise a volunteer force of 10,000 experienced farm workers here in the South. Mitchell said that he conferred in Washington 10 days ago with Col. Jay L. Taylor, Deputy Food Administrator, who held out no hope for the use of the unemployed southerners.

Meanwhile the Agricultural Labor Administration which is directed by Col. Taylor is bringing in Bahaman workers from Nassau to Florida by Pan American transport planes. These workers are brought in under contract, they are guaranteed a minimum wage, housing standards are set and collective bargaining rights protected. Under the provisions of the law American workers are also denied this protection which is extended to foreign labor.

Threat to Freedom Is Seen

MAR 26 1943

Farm Tenants In South May Become Actual Slaves

MAR 26 1943

By Ernest E. Johnson

WASHINGTON — (ANP) — A system of virtual peonage in the clothes of patriotism, is in the process of being established on farms of America with the protection of federal law, and unless sufficient strength is marshalled—and quickly—there will be but few Negroes in the South who even look as though they would recognize 40 acres and a mule who will be able to pick up and leave that area without running the risk of violating the law.

The prongs of this pincer movement are revealed in the passage by a vote of 50 to 24 of the amendment to the Bankhead bill sponsored by the house of the amendment of Stephen Pace, (Georgia) prohibiting a farm worker from leaving a county without the written consent of the county agent, or out of the state without the okay of the state agricultural commissioner.

MAR 26 1943

Keeps Men On Farm

The Johnson amendment not only keeps a man on the farm rather than permit his induction, it practically prevents freedom of movement similarly restrained under the Pace measure. Also a Negro preferring to serve his country in the armed service would be prohibited from doing so if local authorities considered him more useful on the farm.

All of this is made effective by compelling the farm worker with the urge to leave the farm either for other employment or for the armed forces to first secure permission from his local draft board.

Hence, concurrence by the lower house in this insidious attempt to curtail the pursuit of happiness or the protection of liberty, as the case may be, would amount to a specific check on the trend among Negroes who have been going into industrial areas at an increasingly rapid rate.

The amendment reads in part: "No such registrant shall leave such occupation or endeavor or cease to be employed in connection with such production or harvesting unless, prior thereto, he requests his selective service local board to determine, and such local board . . . determines that it is in the best interest of the war effort for him to engage in some other occupation or endeavor, to be employed in some other work, or to become a member of such land or naval forces. . . ."

In the other end of the capitol where the Farm Security administration was being handed $26,100,000 to permit its extension service to do a better job of mobilizing farm workers, the Pace amendment was put through quickly and quietly.

MAR 26 1943

Permission To Move

This measure insists that any farm worker desiring to move to another county or to another state must secure written permission from the county or state agricultural agent.

The Farm Bureau federation, of which Edward O'Neal is national president, has been pressing this legislation. It is interesting to know that county agents of the extension service are dominated by the membership of the federation, and in fact, are generally appointed upon the recommendation of that organization.

MAR 26 1943

In the case of the local draft boards, the situation is not any different in that the draft boards, although appointed by the President, are actually the recommendations of the powerful plantation owners.

MAR 26 1943

In another maneuver, however, the house farm bloc succeeded in prohibiting the government from establishing minimum wage standards, or living and working conditions for the workers it moves under the allowance to the extension service.

MAR 26 1943

Back of all this the desire on the part of large farmer owners to capitalize on the war effort at the expense of the nation. While there is a hue and cry going up that there is a shortage of farm labor, and these several measures are pushed through on that argument, sight is lost of the fact that the chief beneficiaries of this legislation will be the cotton and tobacco planters and not the growers of foodstuffs.

MAR 26 1943

Official Estimates

Official estimates place nearly one-third of total farm labor on cotton and tobacco plantations. There is at present a two year carry-over of cotton, and a huge surplus of tobacco, whereas foodstuffs are running short because of the demands of our armed forces and of lend-lease agreements.

There is no shortage of labor in the south, where cotton and tobacco are grown primarily, although shortages do exist in other areas. But through prohibiting the transfer or movement of workers from the south, sufficient labor is kept available to maintain their crops. Already efforts to reduce cotton crops by 10 per cent have been dashed. The reruction not long ago was approved and in the next move it was rescinded.

MAR 26 1943

The farm owners prefer the status quo. The politicians don't want to lose their constitutents. And the country runs short on hands for planting and harvesting foodstuffs.

MAR 26 1943

Globe and Independent
Nashville, Tenn.

NEW PEONAGE PLAN IN SOUTH AIDED BY DRAFT BOARDS

AUG 20 1943

Southern Tenant Farmers Union Reveals How Workers Are Terrorized

WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 19—The Southern Tenant Farmers Union has brought attention to "the new peonage" which is resulting from Public Law 45, which prohibits the use of public funds to move farm labor without the written approval of the County Agent.

In practice this means no movement of farm labor to areas where they are needed, H. L. Mitchell, secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, pointed out recently to officials of the Department of Justice and the War Food Administration. He gave them a case involving 21 farm workers, paying their own transportation, who were stopped from moving to Cairo, Illinois from Carruthersville, Missouri, in June by the arrest of their drivers on three technical charges of not having proper licenses for such transportation. The Democrat Argus of that city reported June 18th that authorities admitted the driver was arrested "to combat the practice of taking

Negroes And Enforced Labor

Negroest hroughout America are naturally interested and somewhat disturbed by the proposal of enforced labor on the farms and in industries. Their interest, which takes the nature of direct opposition, is not due to unwillingness to work, but, on the contrary it is because they have been refused the opportunity to train for and acquire experience in the skilled occupations. And in the very nature of the case any conscription of labor would fall almost entirely and unjustifiably upon Negro workers. We are not unaware that a great many Negroes have been farm laborers in the past at the lowest prevailing wages. And now when wages in the industries have risen to unprecedented levels, Negroes who are not employed would have to work on the farms at wages which would be forced down by the ceiling prices of farm products. Even so the Negro would have little objections to the proposal. if he could have any confidence that whites and Negroes alike would be required to work for these wages, which would not permit a decent standard of living. We know from past and painful experience just what we might expect—unequal pay and unequal working conditions.

FARM HANDS SHACKLED BY CONGRESS LAW

MAR 27 1943
Chicago Defender

Halt Farmers From Leaving Home Counties

Chicago, Illinois

(See Pictures on Page 3)

By HARRY McALPIN
(Chief, Defender Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON—Congress this week voted for the return of slavery!

MAR 27 1943

Disguised in the dress of war-emergency legislation and bedecked with the frills and trimmings occasioned by a threatened food shortage, both the Senate and House have passed separate bills forcing agricultural workers to stay shackled on farms.

MAR 27 1943

The House, in addition, has made it impossible for workers to move out of the state or even the county; but provides $26,000,000 to move farm laborers into these areas while expressly forbidding the federal government to set up any minimum wages, housing or living standards for the workers so moved.

It is principally the Negro—restricted in the past by prejudice in entering the armed services, particularly by enlistment, and denied opportunities to work in many war plants—who is left in any great numbers on the farms in the South.

During debate on the bill in Senate, it was pointed out that already 70 per cent of farm labor that could leave has already gone into the armed services and into war industries where wages are higher and living conditions better.

MAR 27 1943

Halts Exodus

But now, with labor supplies becoming more and more stringent in shipyards, airplane factories and munitions plants, the acceptance of Negro workers is becoming increasingly widespread, despite the "hamstringing" of the FEPC.

Here is the truth of what is behind the enactment of these bills.

The "farm labor deferment bill" in the Senate, and the farm labor supply bill in the House, are designed primarily to prevent the exodus of Negroes, and their cheap and exploited labor, from the South as occurred in World War I. These bills represent subtle means to this end on the part of the big farmers' lobby, the farm and the southern blocs.

One prominent white southerner and a high government official expressed the belief that Negroes in the South should immediately begin a trek from that section as a non-violent protest to this effort to reduce them again to slavery. They suggest such action begin now before these bills become law.

Not a War Need

That the purpose of these bills is not strictly to serve the war effort was pointed out in the Senate last week by Sen. Kilgore (D., W. Va.) who showed that 21.7 per cent of all the manpower devoted to farm production this year will be in cotton, and 3.6 per cent will be in tobacco. There are surpluses of both these crops. America has a two-year supply of short staple cotton and a one-to-two year supply of tobacco on hand already.

In contrast to the cotton and tobacco percentages of farm workers, Kilgore pointed out the percentages of farm labor being devoted this year to essential and scarce commodities as: truck crops, 2.7 per cent; sugar beets, 1 per cent; white potatoes, 2.4 per cent; dry beans, 9 per cent; dry peas, 0.1 per cent; soy beans, 1.5 per cent; peanuts, 3.4 per cent; and wheat, 4.9 per cent.

The farm labor shortage could be relieved, says Kilgore, if the available farm labor were converted to the scarce food commodities. But cotton and tobacco are bringing higher and higher prices—thanks to the efforts of the farm lobby and farm bloc. The farm labor bills assure these big farmers of adequate cheap labor for exploitation.

'Class Legislation'

Further indication that aid of the war effort is not the primary intent of these measures is the fact that only agriculture is singled out for "class legislation," granting blanket deferment to agricultural workers.

This defect of the bill has been pointed to by some observers as a possible point of attack to urge the President to veto it when both houses of Congress agree on its terms.

The Bankhead bill provides that no person engaged in farm labor may leave his job without permission of his local draft board—the official slave-master to be. No such worker, by reason of an amendment passed by the House without even a standing vote, may leave the county in which he works without the written consent of the county agent, nor leave the state without the written consent of the state agriculture commissioner. Both these officials, especially in the South, are tools of the Farm Bureau Federation, which serves the interests of the big farmers, and frequently names the agents and commissioners.

This amendment means, therefore, that no matter how badly farm labor may be needed elsewhere, it cannot be moved out of the overcrowded southern cotton and tobacco areas without consent of employers.

FEB 27 1943

Rep. Clifford Hope (R. of Kansas.), ranking Republican on the Agriculture committee of the House, said: "No county agent or state commissioner is going to affront the farmers of his county or state by permitting labor to leave."

But to make the return to slavery even more assured, the farm bloc in the House overwhelmed a series of amendments designed to provide workers where they are most needed and to protect the working standards. Instead, they passed a lobby-dictated amendment prohibiting the government from fixing minimum wages or providing suitable housing, living, and working conditions for workers it moves to farms at government expense.

Rep. John Coffee (D. of Wash.), said, after the amendment was approved: "This amounts to civil peonage. It's a triumph for the Dirksens and Tabers." He was referring to Reps. Everett M. Dirksen (R. of Ill.) and John Taber (R. of N. Y.), who led the farm lobby fight on the House floor.

These amendments are considered by some observers as direct violations of the anti-peonage statutes. They tend to vitiate the Emancipation Proclamation, and to ignore the existence of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution. It affects principally Negroes and poor whites.

The type of living conditions to which the poor farmers and farm hands are subjected is almost beyond the imagination of one who has never seen them. They live "in shacks where the rain comes in through a hundred holes," in gunny-sack shelters along drainage ditches.

Tells Conditions

Their working conditions are best described by a worker who left his home in North Carolina to take a job last summer on the eastern shore of Maryland.

He left North Carolina in one of several trucks loaded with Negro field hands bound for the eastern shore, recruited by U. S. Employment Service. According to this farmer, the USES office in his home town told him about the free transportation, about the good housing in camps operated by the FSA, and about a guaranteed "prevailing wage" of 40 cents an hour.

As it turned out, the free transportation was contingent upon the worker's remaining for the full season. If he returned to his point of origin before the end of the season, his transportation was deductible from wages due.

He sat with his hands between his knees, staring at the strip of paper he held—a time sheet from Philips Bros., Salisbury, Md., "farmers." He spoke slowly:

"I know I haven't got no education, but if a man's a man at all, it ain't right that he should put up with just everything.

FEB 27 1943

Intimidation

"When we first got to the place, Mr.—— lined us up and cussed us an' tol' us if there was ever anything we didn't like to 'button our mouths and say nothin'' if we wanted to stay there. That was pretty bad, but nobody said anything back to him.

"It was hot that week in the fields, and some of the women dropped out of the rows to rest a few minutes. Mr.—— he goes up to one of them and cusses her. She felt pretty bad and she talked back to him. Then he hit her. She went back to her row, crying. The pickers were pretty hot about it, but there was nothing we could do. That kind of thing goes on all the time. So, Saturday I said I was goin' an' ask for my time.

"I had worked 51 hours, but the time sheet says 15. I started in Tuesday mornin' and worked until Saturday night. You know that's more than any 15 hours, and we cert'nly did work all day. But my time sheet says 15, and that's what I got paid for. Fifteen hours at 40 cents a hour, with the cost of gettin' there taken out. It's all down there regular on'y they cheated me out of 36 hours work. That don't show on the time sheet. I drew fifty-odd cents and went back to North Carolina."

Tell Starvation

Another case, an ex-Mississippi farmer, told me in Florida some time ago why he left. "In that Delta—it's kind of an outlaw place like ...when they charge up your account in the commissary, it's so and so. If the boss want you to clear somethin' you did. If he didn't, you stayed in debt. We got tired of that so we left the farm. I don't care what you know, you better not say nothin'. That kind of thing just grinds a man's heart."

Another, a Georgia boy, about 20 years old, told me this typical story of his attempt at cropping: "My cotton allotment was eight acres. I made one bale on eight acres. It was nothin' but red clay and sand. The boss man told me I had to farm it, so I farmed it. When I couldn't stand it no more, I quit and come to the Glades to pick. I been pickin' and cultivatin' when there was anything to pick. Somebody goin' to starve 'tween now an' the next pickin'. But a man can't get a place to rent any more. Mighty few owners settle fair. They swindles you out of your checks (AAA benefit checks). No use carryin' it 'fore the law. One white man for the other. I quit because I couldn't get justice.

No Hope Ahead

"Why didn't I move somewhere else? You don't move out of there (Screven County, Ga.) 'less you slip out! That's an outlaw place."

These men, and thousands like them, had moved about seeking relief from unbearable conditions. To them, opportunities to work in northern factories would be particularly attractive. The southern bloc and the farm bloc know this. Undereffectively produced by hopelessway back to slavery — while we the two bills just passed by the men of any race, moving to theirfight to free the world.
Senate and House, these workers tasks like dumb, driven cattle, but by men and women who know would have to stay on the farmthat even though it has taken a with no hope of any improvementglobal war to effect it, they are at in their wage, working, or living last wanted: that they can at last conditions. help in a community of effort toward a decent life in which they too

Slavery could not have been —this time—may share."
worse! But blindly, the southern bloc

An agriculture official said to me: and the farm bloc are pointing the "This country's crops will not be

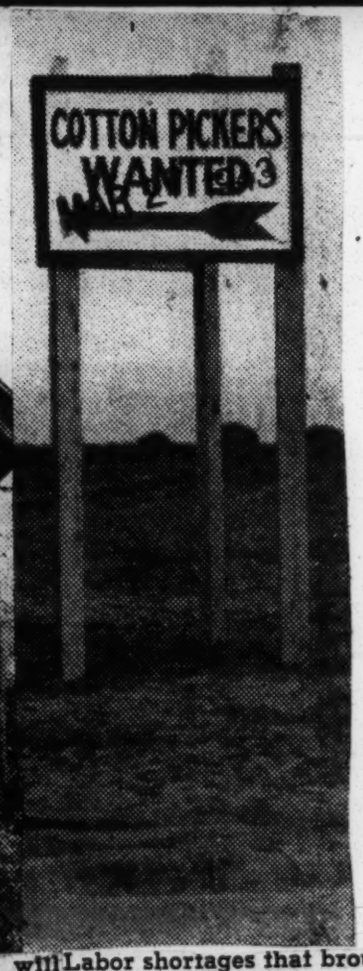
Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

FEB 27 1943

A New Jersey outhouse used by eleven families of potato pickers is typical of the conditions which would be "frozen" by Congressional measure of farm labor.

MAR 27 1943

This is home to a typical Negro farm worker in the South and will continue to be so "for the duration" by Dixie decree embodied in the farm bill that would force all cotton and tobacco farmers to stay chained to their land, refusing to allow them to better their living conditions.



Labor shortages that brought passage of the farm bill sponsored by the Dixie bloc are typified in this sign in the San Joaquin Valley in California.

Florida vegetable pickers and packinghouse workers use outhouses such as the above at Canal Point. These conditions are being "protected" by Southern congressmen in the bill which freezes all farm labor.—All photos by FSA.

MAR 27 1943

Housing conditions among Jersey oyster workers are typical of rural areas where Negroes would be prevented from leaving the county without permission under terms of a bill already passed by both houses of Congress.

MAR 27 1943

Puerto Ricans To Be Brought Here To Work

Journal and Guide

To Aid Shortage Of Farms, Plants Says Governor

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Plans for bringing Puerto Ricans to work on farms and in war industries in the continental United States are being worked out by Insular and Federal agencies in an effort to relieve the labor shortage here as well as the unemployment situation in Puerto Rico, Rexford G. Tugwell, governor of Puerto Rico, reported last week to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes

Governor Tugwell is in Washington attending the meeting of the President's committee to recommend revisions in Puerto Rico's Organic Act.

The Insular Government already has sent 256 industrial workers to the mainland and all have been placed in war industries, Governor Tugwell stated. The War Manpower Commission has now taken over these placement activities and on July 1 opened an office in Puerto Rico under the directorship of Winston Riley, Jr., to continue the work begun by the Insular Government, he reported.

The War Manpower Commission office is now registering qualified workers, and will seek to secure transportation for some of the men by the end of this month.

Representaives of the War Food Administration, the Governor's office, the Department of the Interior, and the War Manpower Commission have held conferences at the Department of the Interior to discuss plans for bringhalf of 1943 to 281,500 units, an

The limited amount of transportation has precluded the bringing in of agricultural workers from Puerto Rico up to the present time. However it is hoped that the transportation situation will ease in time to permit the bringing in of some this season.

Jury Fails To Indict Georgian For Peonage

"Atlanta Daily World"
Atlanta, Ga.

Second Move To Try Cunningham Fails In Macon

JAN 1 5 1943

MACON, Ga. (ANS) — The second attempt by the United States Government to bring William Tolliver Cunningham, Lexington, Georgia farmer, to trial on charges of peonage failed Wednesday when the Federal grand jury declined to indict him.

Cunningham, along with Hamilton McWhorter, Lexington attorney and executive vice chairman of the Georgia Democratic Executive Committee, were indicted by a federal grand jury at Chicago in May 1941, on charges of conspiracy to "hold Negroes in a condition of peonage and slavery," but extradition of the two men to Chicago was denied by United States Judge Bascom Deaver after a hearing at Athens, Ga., in August, 1941.

McWhorter, who appeared before the grand jury here Wednesday as a witness, said he had been informed that the Chicago indictment was nol-prossed last week.

JAN 1 5 1943

The indictment was returned at Chicago after three Negroes, who had worked on Cunningham's farm, were successful in resisting extradition to Oglethorpe County, Ga., to face burglary charges.

Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald
January 14, 1943

PEONAGE CHARGE NO-BILLED

MACON, Ga., Jan. 13—(AP)—A Federal Grand Jury Wednesday declined to indict William Tolliver Cunningham, a Lexington, Ga., farmer, on charges of peonage brought by the United States Department of Justice. Two special assistant attorneys-general from Washington came here to seek the indictment on "slavery and involuntary servitude" growing out of government contentions Cunningham was enslaving Negro farm labor.

College President Helped Indict for Peonage!

The Union
Cincinnati, Ohio

Savannah Peonage Case Not First "All-White" in Georgia, Or Was It?

DEC 2 1943

Savannah is the first arising from Georgia "in which all principals were white" were questioned here when it was recalled that President Horace Mann Bond of the Fort Valley State College had served on a Federal Grand Jury held here in Macon in 1941 that brought indictments against two white men for peonage. In one of the cases the charge was that a white turpentine still manager had held a white family in peonage as the result of non-payment of a small bill. The turpentine manager was freed by the trial jury when the case was brought to trial.

DEC 2 1943

The same August, 1941 Federal Grand Jury, including President Bond, brought an indictment against a white planter for holding several Negroes in a condition of peonage on his Middle Georgia plantation. This case, likewise, failed of conviction when brought to trial.

DEC 2 1943

Unless the term "principals" includes jurors, then, it was pointed out that the Savannah case is not the first of its kind. The 1941 indictments, which were brought in the Middle Georgia Circuit presided over by Judge Bascom Deaver, are regarded by court experts here as probably the first in American history in which a Negro served on a Federal Grand Jury that brought indictments for peonage.

Federal grand jury services for Negroes in this district, however, has a long precedent, as for many years the jury box has included Negroes.

Fort Valley, Ga.,
December 1, 1943.

Mr. Claude Barnett,,
The Associated Negro Press,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Barnett:

I could not resist the temptation of sending you this note. When it happened in 1941, I was happy to bask in anonymity. Mr. Talmadge was on the loose and the planter we indicted lives only 50 miles from us. In presenting the case, the solicitor said that they had hoped to get an indictment against this man—Champion—for murder, as the body of a Negro peon from his place was found floating in the Flint River, ballistic tests proving that his revolver (Champion's) had fired the shot.

DEC 2 1943

Both cases were most dramatic. The solicitor was very smart. He brought in the white case first. The white peon woman testified, with her husband. I felt justified in voting for indictment for many reasons: one being that after all, if I did not vote for indictment, I should place myself in the position before my fellow-caucasian juror's of disagreeing with a white womanes sworn testimony! The vote on this was very close, my vote proving the deciding vote to indict.

DEC 2 1943

When the horrible case against this white planter was brought in, and once already having voted to indict, the jury could not afford not to indict the planter for holding the Negro in peonage: and so they voted 22-1 for indictment.

I am sending a copy of this letter to my good friend Mr. Dabney so that I will have at least two witnesses as to the reason for my sudden demise [illegible] should happen. (So far I have been happy [illegible] quite anonymous about my precedent breaking, "first Negro", honors in this respect.

Best wishes,
HORACE M. BOND.

Justice Dept. To Investigate Mississippi Peonage Case

Informer
Houston Tex.

CHICAGO.—(ANP)—The department of justice last week placed the Peonage case of Nora Pope, Negro man of Lyon, Miss., under active investigation, according to William Henry Huff of Chicago, chief counsel for the American Committee to Abolish Peonage.

JUN 19 1943

The Nora Pope case was reported to Huff in a recent letter by W. J. Lacy, wealthy white Lyon farmer and merchant. The facts of the case include the following:

Pope pleaded guilty many years ago to manslaughter charges and served time at the Parchman, Miss., prison. As a trusty, commonly called a "shooter," Pope prevented the escape of a convict and was rewarded by former Gov. Bilbo with a parole. He was given in custody to a Mrs. Ringgold of Cleveland, Miss., whom he served for 12 years, during which his employer assigned him to jobs at will and was "very careless" about paying him, the letter said. Last winter found the ex-convict in dire need of sufficient clothing; when he asked Mrs. Ringgold to advance him money enough to purchase some warm clothes she refused and ordered him to "get off the place."

Pope then asked Lacy for employment. The new employer stated that he advanced the man $25 and sent his truck to move him. However, two days later Mrs. Ringgold came to Lacy and demanded $100 for Pope's release, and said a refusal to pay her would result in her returning the ex-prisoner to Parchman "before tomorrow night." The woman claimed $75 was debt, while the balance was fo Pope's moving without her per mission.

JUN 19 1943

Lacy said he took the threat lightly as changing jobs is not considered a felony anywhere in America. However he found that he was mistaken when a deputy sheriff appeared on the scene and returned Pope to Parchman where he still remains. Lacy then employed the services of Judge Crisler of Clarksdale, Miss., to secure Pope's release, but after a while it was discovered that the governor of Mississippi was a friend of Mrs. Ringgold, and that he would consider her wishes in the matter.

A few days later Mrs. Ringgold sent Pope a letter asking that the $100 be paid her, as "a lesson should be taught." The letter, stated Lacy, was given to Judge Crisler who in turn gave it to Gov. Paul Johnson. Since then, Lacy has been unable to regain the letter.

"Here is the case of a private citizen," Lacy stated, "being the one to return to prison a parolee, without a charge of any kind being made of the parole being violated. Nor has Pope been arraigned before any kind of hearing in or out of a court, but just willed back after 12 years of good conduct. He just wished to change employers."

Sees Dixie Court Decision As Great Racial Victory

Defender
Chicago, Ill.

SEP 25 1943

MEMPHIS. (ANP)—If the adjudication of a recent court case here involving a youth who escaped from a Mississippi work farm where he had been beaten and whose return was sought by his white bosses is any indication, there is evidence of a changed attitude toward justice for Negroes in southern courts.

The youth, Joshua Thomas, has fled from the farm and secured work in Memphis, but was relocated by his farmer bosses who attempted to force his return. Thomas ran from the men and was arrested by local police without incident. Ordinarily, it was pointed out, under the same circumstances he would have been shot by the farmers.

When brought into court the bosses, R. W. Gill, 24, R. G. Gill, 31, and T. A. Hudgens, of Whitehaven, Tenn., admitted that Thomas had been whipped while working on one of their Mississippi farms, and that they had come to Memphis to "get him to go back to the farm to work his crop." They denied they had ever intended to harm him although two guns were found in their car.

Police testified that the youth had obtained a government release as a result of the beatings. Judge Kinkle declared that the farmers' actions "did not conform to the principles of liberty" and fined all three $26 on charges of disturbing the peace. The Gills were held for the state to face additional charges involving their possession of firearms.

4-1943

Missouri

Peonage Investigation Urged

Washington, June 1—Victor W. Rotnem, chief of the Civil Liberties Section, Department of Justice was urged this week by the NAACP Washington Bureau to investigate charges that Negro farm workers in southeastern Missouri are being arrested, beaten and forced into virtual peonage.

The NAACP has information that large farmers and county police officials, in an effort to stop Negro farm workers from leaving the area for more lucrative employment in industrial centers, have resorted to placing them under arrest on spurious charges and when unable to pay fines requiring that they work on local plantations.

David Davis, a farm worker in Wardell County, Missouri, was taken from his home on May 4 by the local constable and lodged in jail at Caruthersville. It is alleged that Davis was brutally beaten by the constable and four state troopers. One of his eyes was nearly put out and when he returned to his home several lacerations about his body were noticeable. Under the threat that he would be killed and thrown into the river, Davis is alleged to have confessed to charges of being a "peeping Tom.' The white women who are supposed to have made the complaint could not identify him.

It is said that Davis was fined $100, without trial, and being unable to pay it, forced to sign a contract to help cultivate 15 acres of cotton on the farm of O. P. Tilghmon.

Other farm workers in the area have been threatened with similar treatment.

JUN 2 1943

In 2 States

(Defender Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON—The Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice has been asked to investigate a conspiracy on the part of the county agent and the Pemiscott County Farm Labor committee in Missouri to use the state police to hold farm workers in virtual peonage in Missouri.

Twenty-one farm workers, it is reported, were enroute to the fruit harvest in Michigan last month, and were prevented from leaving Missouri by the state police. The truck owner, Al Buchanan, was arrested by a state patrolman on charges of not having proper licenses and lodged in jail. The workers were forced to return to their homes.

According to the Democrat Argus of Carruthersville, County Agent A. M. Burghey and the Pemiscott County Farm Labor committee had appealed to local and state police to put a stop to the practice of carrying labor out of the state and out of the county to other parts of the state.

In the meantime, a different tactic was being pursued in Arkansas. There, it is reported, the planters in St. Francis County are circulating contracts and demanding that sharecroppers agree to remain on their plantations for the duration of the war. These agreements, which union members term "yellow dog contracts," are said to be presented to sharecroppers and if they refuse to sign, they are evicted from the plantation and their 1943 crops taken from them.

JUL 31 1943

JUN 3 1943

Ask Probe Of Peonage

Defender
Chicago, Ill.

4-1943

PENNSYLVANIA

To Prosecute Farmer After Two Negro Migratory Workers Burn To Death In Fire In His Barn

Age
New York, N. Y.

QUAKERTOWN, Pa.—The state will seek the conviction of Edward O. Mastin for the deaths of Willie Cooper and Mrs. Odell May, Negro migratory workers who were burned to death here August 17 in a barn on the Mastin farm on Route No. 2. It is expected that the case will be tried early in October.

A personal investigation by John Grantham, president of the Lehigh Valley NAACP Branch, revealed that the victims were two of fifty migratory workers who were brought from Florida by a white contractor to gather in the tomato crop on the Mastin farm. Tomatoes picked by these workers are sold to the government through the Campbell Soup Company.

Most of the workers are housed in chicken coops; the largest being about 7 feet square and only 5 feet in height. Grantham said in his report "workers along with their children are living in these small chicken coops--and these little coops, even if they were fit to live in, are too small for a couple to live in comfortably—but the most horrible thing of all is that nearly every worker has a large family and he and his family live in these small houses. This condition is worst than slavery could have ever been." Unable to take pictures of the housing provided for workers, Grantham submitted to the NAACP national office a free-hand sketch of the chicken coops which he described as filthy and unfit for human habitation.

Though dissatisfied with the conditions under which they have been forced to live, the workers said that they have not been able to earn enough money for railroad fares.

Trapped In Barn Fire

The deceased persons were living in a barn and were burned to death at midday when they were trapped by a fire on the third floor. There was only one exit and one of the workers suffered a broken back when he attempted to leap from a window; another was severely burned.

At the coroner's hearing at Quakertown on August 27, the coroner's jury held Mastin responsible for the death of the two workers. Prentice Thomas, member of the NAACP national legal staff, attended the hearings.

Evidence presented at the hearing showed that several families lived in the barn. Some of the persons had oil stoves on which they cooked. The barn was filled with hay and other inflammable material. There were no fire escapes; the only exit being through one door and the windows.

District Attorney Edward Blister, Doylestown, Pa., said that in order for the state to make its case it would be necessary for Claude Jackson, one of the workers who last saw the deceased persons alive, to appear as a witness. Jackson has agreed to remain in the state.

Migrants Lived In Chicken Coops

Philadelphia Tribune
SEP 1 1943
Philadelphia, Pa.

QUAKER, Pa. — The state will seek the conviction of Edward O. Mastin for the deaths of Willie Cooper and Mrs. Odell May, migratory workers who were burned to death here August 17 in a barn on the Mastin farm on Route 2. It is expected that the case will be tried early in October.

A personal investigation by John Grantham, president of the Lehigh Valley NAACP Branch, revealed that the victims were two of fifty migratory workers who were brought from Florida by a white contractor to gather in the tomato crop on the Mastin farm.

Most of the workers are housed in chicken coops; the largest being about 7 feet square and only five feet in height. Grantham said in his report "workers along with their children are living in these small chicken coops—and these little coops even if they were fit to live in, are too small for a couple to live comfortably — but the most horrible thing of all is that nearly every worker has a large family and he and his family live in these small houses . . . This condition is worst than could slavery have ever been."

Though dissatisfied with the conditions under which they have been forced to live, the workers said that they have not been able to earn enough money for railroad fares.

The deceased persons were living in a barn and were burned to death at midday when they were trapped by a fire on the third floor. There was only one exit and one of the workers suffered a broken back when he attempted to leap from a window; another was severely burned.

At the coroner's hearing at Quakertown on August 27, the coroner's jury held Mastin responsible for the death of the two workers. Prentice Thomas, member of the NAACP national legal staff, attended the hearings.

Evidence presented at the hearing showed that several families lived in the barn. Some of the persons had oil stoves on which they cooked. The barn was filled with hay and other inflammable material. There were no fire escapes, the only exit being through one door and the windows.

District Attorney Edward Blister, Doylestown, Pa., said that in order for the state to make its case it would be necessary for Claude Jackson, one of the workers who last saw the deceased persons alive, to appear as a witness. Jackson has agreed to remain in the state.

Chicken Coops Used On Farm To House Migratory Workers

Age
New York, N. Y.

QUAKERTOWN, Pa. —When the trial of E. O. Mastin, tomato farm owner, here in whose barn two migrant workers were burned to death August 17, begins next month, the tomato harvest will be over and most of the migrant farmhands he imported from Florida will have moved away in order to continue to make a living, NAACP lawyers said this week. With these witnesses gone, chances for a conviction lessen.

At a coroner's hearing at Quakertown on August 27, the coroner's jury held Mastin responsible for the deaths of Willie Cooper and Mrs. Odell May. Cooper and Mrs. May were trapped in a crowded barn in which several families lived on the Mastin farm. There were no fire escapes and only one exit.

An investigation of the case by John Grantham, president of the Lehigh Valley NAACP, had revealed that migrant workers on the Mastin farm live almost in the state of peonage.

Most of these workers, who were brought from Florida to pick tomatoes which are sold to the government through the Campbell Soup Company, are housed with their families in tiny chicken coops, filthy and unfit for human habitation. Although dissatisfied with living conditions, the workers claim they have been unable to earn enough money to leave the farm.

Farm Labor Camps Need 75 Boys, 4 Supervisors

Philadelphia Tribune
AUG 14 1943
Philadelphia, Pa.

Opportunities for 75 boys to help harvest the late crops in Pennsylvania are being offered by the arm Work Project with offices in room No. 702 Board of Education, on Parkway.

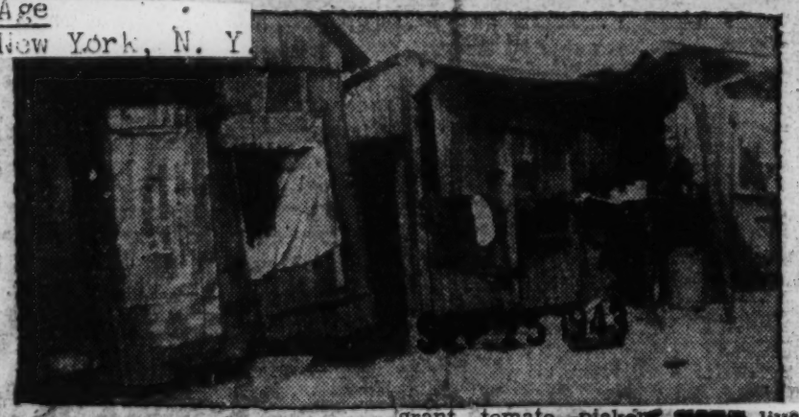
At the same time, at least four colored male supervisors will be needed for the supervisor's staff of the three State Student Farm Labor camps in Bucks and Franklin counties.

Board, lodging and fair wages will be arranged by the Extension Service of Pennsylvania. Interested parents and boys over 14, should get in touch promptly with Bertram L. Lutton, at Rit. 1940.

"These boys are going to live under a wholesome environment," Lutton told the TRIBUNE, "and the supervisors will see to it that they are treated as human beings and not as peons."

Migratory Workers Live In Chicken Coops

Age
New York, N. Y.



These are Quakertown, Pennsylvania chicken coops in which migrant tomato pickers live with their families. Some of the coops, the largest of which is about seven feet square and five feet high, are housing families with as many as five members.

File Suit To Void Election In All-Negro Village

The Plaindealer
Kansas City, Kan.

Officials Seek To Regain Control Claiming Plantation Owners Rule Arkansas Village Through Negro Stooges

Memphis, May 21. (ANP)—A petition was filed Friday in the Crittenden County Court to set aside an election for municipal offices held in the all-Negro town of Edmondson, Ark., on April 66.

K. T. Sutton, attorney for the Southern Tenant Farmers union, is representing T. P. Page, candidate for mayor; A. H. Matthews, candidate for recorder; Reuben Hendricks, W. M. Cummings, Walter Hampton and Dr. George W. Austin, candidate for alderman.

All, responsible Negro leaders, are seeking to regain control of the town's affairs. H. E. Weaver, white plantation owner, for several years has controlled the town through stooges appointed as the town's officials.

Twenty-four votes cast by qualified electors were not counted. The poll tax showed only 26 eligible to vote. The slate declared elected by Weaver, who was the election judge, was not even qualified under the law to have their names on the ballot.

Those elected included a man who could not read or write, Dan J. Smoot, mayor.

Edmondson was founded following the Reconstruction era. Crittendon county with a population of 90 per cent Negro was the last county in Arkansas to return to "white supremacy." Negroes served as county officials up until 1888 when they were driven out after a massacre by the Ku Klux Klan in which hundreds were killed.

Some of the leaders who escaped the Klan later returned to establish the town of Edmondson which until 1932 remained in the possession of their descendants. None of the land in or near the town was ever to be sold to whites.

In 1932, a suspicious-looking Negro purchased a business lot proposing to open a general store. It turned out that he was acting for the white planter, Weaver, who opened a commissary, a whiskey store and a honky-tonk. Weaver tried every means at his disposal to secure the property owned by Negroes. He obtained illegal tax titles to 40 houses and lots in town and 160 acres of farm land nearby. Electing a set of town officials subservient to his interests he proceeded to evict the home-owners, tear down their houses and plow up the streets of the town.

Terror was resorted to, one family had gasoline spread about their home and it fired in the dead of night.

In 1936, the Southern Tenant Farmers union was organized and Edmondson and the union local became the rallying point for opposition to the plantation owners of Crittendon county who support Weaver.

In 1940 suits were filed by an attorney hired by the union to recover the property belonging to the Negro citizens. Damages for destruction of the property which amounted to more than $25,000 were also asked. Weaver's attorneys, taking advantage of every legal technicality, are fighting a delaying battle in the Arkansas courts, postponing the hour for the case to go to the supreme court and be tried on its merits.

Notice has been served that unless a favorable decision is handed down in the Crittendon County Court and a fair election ordered this case too will go to the state supreme court.

Several Crittendon county officials were convicted in the U. S. courts in 1941 of conspiracy to deprive citizens of their civil rights and sentenced to long terms in the federal prison.

MAY 21 1943

4-1943

Texas Farmer Used Worker As a Horse

Peoples Voice
New York N.Y.

APR 3 1943

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex.—(FP)—A 48-year-old Negro farm worker, Alfred Irwin, testified at the trial of his employers, under federal indictment here on charges of keeping Irwin in slavery and peonage, that for four years they beat him, starved him and used him instead of a horse to pull a plow.

APR 3 1943

Irwin stripped to the waist in the courtroom and exhibited old scars and marks on his back, stomach, chest and arms, tokens of frequent beatings inflicted by Alex L. Skrobarcyzk, 62-year-old farmer, and his daughter, Susie.

APR 3 1943

Government witnesses confirmed Irwin's statements, testifying that they had had seen the worker beaten many times with chains, clubs and bull whips until he bled. Irwin lived in a chicken house and was given only flour and dry corn to eat.

When asked why he remained on the farm for four years, Irwin replied in a low voice: "I was cowed. I was afraid to leave."

APR 3 1943

Texas

Texas Farmer And Daughter Guilty Of Enslaving Man

Daily World
Atlanta, Georgia

MAR 20 1943

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas—(SNS)—Convicted for forcing a Negro to work as a slave on their Bee County farm, Alex Skrobarcyzk and his daughter, Miss Susie Skrobarcyzk, were sentenced Friday to serve terms in federal penitentiary.

It was the first time in the nation's history that a woman faced a federal prison for keeping a slave.

MAR 20 1943

The father and daughter were found guilty of forcing Alfred Irwin, 48, to work as a slave on their Bee County farm. The father was sentenced to serve four years in prison, while the daughter received a two-year term.

Neighbors had testified that Irwin was kept in a chicken coop and was whipped or beaten with chains when he disobeyed. One neighbor told the court Irwin freqquently came to his home at night bleeding from wounds presumably inflicted by the Skrobarcyzks and begging for food.

Tex. Farmer Gets 4 Yrs. in Slavery Case

Baltimore, Md.
Afro-American

MAR 27 1943

WASHINGTON

A 62-year-old white Texas farmer and his daughter were sentenced to four- and two-year prison terms, respectively, last week for violating the Federal Slavery Statutes.

MAR 27 1943

They were accused of aiding each other in causing Alfred Irving to be held as a slave by threatening and intimidating him, and by inflicting bodily injury.

Attorney General Francis Biddle announced Thursday that the two, Alex L. Skrobarczyk, and his daughter, Susie, 29, had been convicted by a jury in Federal court at Corpus Christi, Texas.

This was the first conviction of a woman under either the slavery or peonage statutes, and the country's second conviction under the slavery statute, the first being in Arkansas in 1935.

Man Indicted for Peonage

At the same time, Attorney General Biddle announced that a Federal Grand Jury at Meridian, Miss., has returned an indictment charging Donald Castle of Lauderdale County, Miss., with violations of the Federal Anti-Peonage and Anti-Slavery Statutes.

The indictment followed an FBI investigation of the report of a law enforcement officer of Lauderdale County that Rossy Wyse had been forcibly seized by Castle and returned at gun point to the latter's sawmill near Toomsuba, Miss., to work off an alleged $20 debt.

MAR 27 1943

The defendant was arraigned Thursday and pleaded not guilty. The maximum penalties for violating either the anti-peonage or anti-slavery statute is a fine of $5,000 or five years imprisonment, or both.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

TEXAN GETS 4 YEARS FOR HOLDING SLAVE

FEB 27 1943

Hand Hitched To Plow Beaten Like Horse By White Man

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex. — The vivid picture of a Negro farmhand being hitched to a plow and beaten as if he were a horse, painted by three government witnesses supporting the story of the victim, resulted in the conviction of a 62-year-old white man and his 29-year-old daughter on charges of slavery here last week.

FEB 27 1943

The father, Alex Skrobarcyzk, was sentenced to four years in prison and the daughter, Susie, to two years. A jury of 11 white men and one Negro found the pair guilty on the slavery charge but acquitted them on the count of peonage.

The victim, Alfred Irwin, presenting a pathetic figure as he was called upon to tell the story of how his 20th century "master" and his daughter enslaved and beat him, thumbed the buttonholes of his unkempt shirt throughout his stay on the witness stand. He showed clearly that he was unfamiliar with what was going on and even hesitated when he was called upon to exhibit the bruises that had been left on his body by the whippings.

Lived In Chicken Shack

Both man and daughter were accused of having struck Irwin "on numerous occasions" with a bull whip, chains and clubs. They are also said to have forced the colored man to live in a chicken house, eating flour and dry corn, which he was compelled to cook outside the shack.

MAR 27 1943

The first witness, Luke Bazan, employed on a nearby ranch, told of seeing Irwin beaten and hitched to a plow. E. H. Schwartz, dairy farmer, said the victim had frequently come to his place at night bleeding at the mouth and begging for food. Agnes Takowitz, former employe on the same farm with Irwin, declared she had often seen the man beaten until he bled.

At the same time, a federal grand jury at Meridian, Miss., has returned an indictment charging Donald Castle, white, of Lauderdale County, with violations of the federal anti-peonage and anti-slavery statutes.

The indictment charged that Rossy Wyse was compelled "by threats, intimidation, whipping and beating to work and labor involuntarily and against his will" for Castle.

MAR 27 1943

Put To Work At Gun Point

The indictment followed an FBI investigation initiated on the basis of information supplied by a local enforcement officer that Wyse had been forcibly seized by Castle and returned at gun point to the latter's sawmill near Toomsuba, Miss., to work off an alleged $20 debt.

The officer reported having sought the counsel of a state prosecutor and that the latter agreed a federal law was involved and should be handled by the FBI. Castle was arrested and arraigned late last week. He pleaded not guilty.

Maximum penalty on the anti-slavery charge is $5,000 fine or five years or both. A similar penalty is carried for violation of the anti-peonage law.

Witnesses Tell Of Cruelties Dealt Negro Farm Hand

Courier
Pittsburgh Pa.

CORPUS CHRISTI, Tex., Mar. 25—Ordered into court last week to answer charges of keeping Alfred Irwin, 48 years old, as a slave on a farm was Susie Skrobarcyzk and her father Alex, who were accused of beating and starving the farmhand and forcing him to live in a chicken coop. Testimony as to the beating was presented by witnesses and photographs of the miserable condition the farm hand had been seen in when he was found by officers. One witness who testified was Agnes Takowitz, former employe on the farm. During the trial before Judge [illegible] Hannay in Federal Court, [illegible] B. Hannay in District Attorney Bowie, emphasized by the grounds of the heavy with Skrobarcyzk, identified him as the farmhand and a 16-year-old youth testified that they had been chained to irwin during the Skroba-dence. "How did he feed him?" "He gave him flour and dry corn." "And where did the Negro live?" "He lived in a chicken house." "Did you ever see Skrobarcyzk shown photographs of beat him?" "Yes. Sometimes he walked up to the counsel and whipped him." "Who whipped him?" "Skrobarcyzk." "Not Susie, though?" pressed Bowie. "He mistreated him."

"Yes, she whipped him, too."

"What did she whip him with?"

"A stick—a whip—a piece of iron, whatever she could reach."

"Why did Alex whip Irwin?"

"I don't know why."

"Did the Negro ever try to harm Susie?"

"No."

"Did he ever try to fight back when he was whipped?"

"No."

Bowie brought forth the bull whip which had been introduced in the morning session and showed it to the witness.

"Did you ever see this whip before?"

"Yes, at Skrobarcyzk's."

The woman said she had often seen Skrobarcyzk use the whip on the Negro. She also identified the chain and said the farmer also beat his Negro with it and with the steel-studded rope.

"How many times did he beat the Negro?" asked Bowie.

"A great many times" was the answer.

"And Susie?"

"A great many times."

Under cross-examination, Leo Duran, who with Judge T. M. Cox of Beeville is defending the pair, asked the woman why she left the employ of Skrobarcyzk.

"Because he treated me like that N——r."

The woman also admitted in cross-examination—and very frankly—that she was legally divorced and living with another man in Bee county.

SAYS HITCHED TO PLOW

Luke Bazan, employed as a fence rider on a neighboring ranch, was the afternoon's first witness. He testified in Spanish, also through an interpreter, and stated he had on many occasions fed the Negro and had twice seen Skrobarcyzk use the bull whip on Irwin for slight provocation.

Once, Bazan said, after a horse had run away from Irwin, Skrobarcyzk beat him in a rage and then hitched him to the plow, forcing him into the traces with the horses. Afterwards, Bazan said, Irwin was compelled to carry the plowshare on his shoulders 500 yards to the barn.

Asked to illustrate how the Negro had recoiled when whiplashed Bazan stood before the jury and swayed from side to side with upraised arms. The Negro never tried to defend himself, Bazan said.

"How often did you feed him when he came to your house?" asked Bowie.

"I gave him food all the time."

"How often did he ask you for food?"

"He usually came every other night after dark."

"And did you give him cigarets?"

"Yes, once or twice when he asked me," said Bazan. "But Alex told me please not to give him cigarets because he said the boy was making plenty of money."

"Did you ever see him with any money?"

"No, sir. I never saw him with any money."

In cross-examination, Bazan testified he, himself, would have been unable to carry the plow he saw on the Negro's back. He said he never saw the man away from the Skrobarcyzk farm except when he called for food and the once he was pursuing a runaway horse.

SAYS NEVER DISCUSSED MONEY

When Duran attempted to show that the Negro was bringing eggs or poultry or milk to Bazan's, he made stout denial and asserted he had never discussed money with the Negro at any time. He further insisted he never entered into conversation with him other than to grant the Negro's requests for food.

E. H. Schwarz, ranching employer of Bazan, said he also had been approached by the Negro, begging for food, but that he had stopped aiding him "because I heard indirectly that Skrobarcyzk did not like the idea."

"Two years ago he came to my house one night after I had gone to bed. I went down and found him standing just inside the gate, his face bloody from a cut over the eye. I gave him permission to go to a vacant house on my place, west of Skrobarcyzk's, and next morning I carried him food. Later I saw him back at work in Skrobarcyzk's fields."

Schwarz said he reported the incident to Sheriff Corrigan of Beeville, but that the Negro continued to work for Skrobarcyzk. In cross-examination, Schwarz said he had never tried to hire the Negro and he insisted there was no "bad blood" between him and Skrobarcyzk.

He further told Cox that the Negro told him the first year he was employed by Skrobarcyzk that he was "farming on halves," but that at a later time he told him he had never "gotten anything out of it."

Schwarz said he never saw the Negro get a whipping and he never saw the Negro in town. He had only Corrigan's word for it that his complaint was investigated, he said. He said he knew no reason "other than fear" why the Negro should not have left Skrobarcyzk's employ.

"AFRAID TO LEAVE"

"He told me he was afraid to leave," Schwarz said.

Frank Yeoman, another neighbor of Skrobarcyz's, said he had offered the Negro a job, but "he said he couldn't, for he was afraid Skrobarcyzk would kill him."

Yeoman's 16-year-old son, Lonzo Leroy Yeoman, testified he also had seen Skrobarcyzk strike Irwin with the bull whip.

"Did you ever tell anyone?" he was asked in cross-examination.

"Yes."

"Whom did you tell?"

"My father and a lot of people."

"Did you tell the sheriff?"

"Yes, I told the sheriff when he asked me about it after Skrobarcyzk was arrested. I was pretty mad about it when I told my father."

Bowie showed the boy one of the Government exhibits, a picture taken by J. B. Guin, Beeville photographer, on the night of September 15, 1942, when Susie Skrobarcyzk was arrested.

"Did you ever see Irwin dressed like that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you ever see any scars on his body like those?"

"Yes, sir."

"When was it that you saw Skrobarcyzk beat Irwin?"

"Last year when I went there for a Stillson wrench."

SAYS FARMER CURSED NEGRO

H. H. Curtis, a Beeville farmer since 1900, said he often heard Skrobarcyzk using profane language on the Negro, sometimes while passing and sometimes while he was at his home half a mile away.

"Do you mean to say you could hear Skrobarcyzk cursing the Negro half a mile away?" asked Bowie.

"Yes, sir," said Curtis.

"Did you ever see him beat the Negro?"

"No, but I sometimes heard him."

"How do you mean that?"

"Well, one day I was passing by and a heard a lick in the barn. I heard Alexs' voice calling the N——r into the barn and then I heard the lick and a low voice cursing. The barn was sitting close to the road."

Frequently during the testimony of Curtis, the bailiffs were obliged to call for order in the crowded gallery as his answers under cross-examination brought forth laughter. Duran attempted to get an admission from Curtis that he had had trouble with Skrobarcyzk over a missing bulldog and missing corn.

The Negro had stated in his presence, Curtis admitted, that Skrobarcyzk's bulldog was at the Curtis place. Skrobarcyzk later told him, Curtis said, the Negro accused him of taking corn.

"You knew the N——r was lying?" asked Duran.

"I told Skrobarcyzk he was lying," answered Curtis.

"In fact, you regarded the N——r as totally unreliable?"

"Well, a N——r will lie, you know," answered Curtis with such earnestness the spectators broke forth in laughter.

When order was restored, Duran asked again:

"You would not, in fact, believe this Negro at all, would you?"

"Well, if I knew he was telling the truth, I would," was the ready response, and again the bailiffs were rapping for order.

During the morning session, two Bee county deputy sheriffs, Robert B. Hale and R. V. Ennis, the jailer, testified as to the condition in which they found Irvin on the night of September 15.

Hale testified that when he first saw Irwin he was standing between two horses hitched to a sulky rake "trying to hide his person from us." He said Irwin either declined or was unable at the time to answer questions, standing looking at the ground and refusing to come out until urged several times. Hale testified Susie Skrobarcyzk was standing over Irwin.

Irwin told him later, Hale testified, that Skrobarcyzk had whipped him.

State Highway Patrolman Frank Probst and Dr. L. W. Kirkland, county physician, testified they had found Irwin in a beaten condition.

4-1943
Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

Rescue Family Held as Slaves

S. BOSTON, Va.—The story of the rescue from slavery of a 55-year-old woman and her two children was told this week by the Halifax County branch of the NAACP. APR 24 1943

The three had been held in bondage at least twenty-five years by a white family in Dudley, Va., about three and a half miles from the county seat of Halifax.

The mother is Mrs. Bettie Dews and her children, Miss Janie Dews, 25, and Jack, 16. Both children are said to have been born on the white plantation where Mrs. Dews was left when quite young.

Home One-Room Cabin

The wife of the owner of the farm is reported to have told a NAACP committee that she considered the family "her property, not to be taken away by anybody." She then ordered the group off of her property.

Before leaving, the group secretly inspected the home of the Dews family and found it to be a one-room cabin containing a bed and cot, which had no mattresses, and a broken stove. Sawed off blocks of wood served as chairs.

Although the family lived only about 50 yards from the Winns Creek colored school, the girl had never been to school and the boy attended only as long as required by law. Neither had attended church. APR 24 1943

No Pay for Women

It was learned that Jack received $4.50 a month as janitor of the Winns Creek white Baptist church, $4.00 of which went to his white "owner."

The women said they received no pay for working on the farm and were whipped if they did not do as much as was expected of them. APR 24 1943

They also said that they were not allowed to visit or to receive visitors, and that relatives who tried to get them away were driven off. APR 24 1943

Now Living with Sister

After conferring with a lawyer, the NAACP committee, headed by J. S. Carrington, president of the branch, made plans to take the family away and to provide transportation, food, and shelter for them.

The family is now residing in Mayfield with Mrs. Corine Bolden, sister of Mrs. Dews.

Virginia

Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

Slavery Bonds Broken

Mrs. Bettie Dew, center front, tells AFRO Representative B. T. Gillespie, left, and J. S. Carrington, NAACP president, how she was kidnapped when a child and held in slavery by John Mayo, Dudley, Va., plantation owner. She and her two children, Jane, 25, and Jack, 15, seen at back, were recently rescued by relatives and the NAACP of South Boston, Va.

By B. T. GILLESIPE

SOUTH BOSTON, Va. — Mrs. Bettie Dews, 55, mother of four children, all born without aid of a physician, gave the AFRO a graphic story, of how she was kidnapped and she and her children held in slavery on a plantation at Dudley, Va., here this week.

Mrs. Dews and her family were rescued a few days ago when the NAACP succeeded in removing her from the custody of white masters who had held her in virtual slavery for 42 years. With her are a daughter, Jane 25, and a son, Jack. 15. Jane had never seen a piece of money until Sunday, when she was given a dime and allowed to attend a church service for the first time in her life. MAY 8 1943

Forbidden to Talk

Shy of talking to people, which they have been forbidden to do during their life time, the Dews family told of how they have for days and weeks lived on bread alone. Other days they got a little meat, but never a well-balanced meal. Asked how they slept, Jane said they had two quilts adntwo blankets for the entire family. They had no pillows, sheets, or matresses, but a tick made from straw carreed from the hay field. They never knew what it was to be warm at night and some nights they did not sleep at all.

The Dews were made to work on the farm. They cut logs to build a barn, dug ditches, harvested the crops and hauled stable manure. None of the family had ever had a physician. Mrs. Dews said she had suffered severely with her teeth, and once she had one pulled. The rest ached and loosened. She pulled them all out herself. She has no teeth now. MAY 8 1943

Only Jack, who was sent to school just enough to keep the school authorities away, can count money.

Born in Sunflower

Mrs. Dews was born in Sunflower, Va., along with five other children. In South Boston, now, she has two sisters, Mrs. Corinne Bolden and Mrs. Hallie Morris. Their parents were George and Mrs. Tiny Dew. After the death of the mother, who died last, Mrs. Morris, the oldest of the girls took the girls to live with them. The son was dead.

According to Mrs. Bolden, Mrs. Dew disappeared and some time later it turned up that she was living on the Mayo farm.

Mrs. Dews says that a white farmer, John Mayo, now dead, picked her up at her home at Sunflower, and carried her away to work on the plantation at Dudley, where she has since remained.

Mrs. Bolden told the AFRO that several times she went to the Mayo home to contact her sister, but Mrs. Mayo refused to let her see her. Once she did see Mrs. Dew, but she refused to leave. Mrs. Dew told the AFRO she was afraid to leave, that she had been threatened. MAY 8 1943

Held in Captivity

Mrs. Dew's sisters never made it known to the citizens here that Mrs. Dew was being held on the Mayo farm. News of the family's plight was known when a near-by farmer came to the city a few weeks ago and told a store keeper.

Immediately, the NAACP went to the Mayo home. Mrs. Mayo said that the family was property of hers and refuse to let the group contact them. One night, under the cover of darkness, the group, led by J. S. Carrington, president of the local branch of the NAACP, went to the hunt and carried the Dews to South Boston.